

HB 488 Sponsored by Llew Jones

I am here to support House Bill 488.

I feel this bill is the only way I will have the opportunity to have my taxes go to the school district that three generations of my family have attended and future generations will attend. Our farm is part of the original Brady school district and we have been attending the Conrad school district for sixty years. We drove 13 miles to meet a Conrad school bus on the district line, along with other families from the Brady School District # 19.

I feel it is my moral responsibility and right to support the school that is in my county, Pondera, and the town where I do most of all my business and not a school in another county, Teton, and a town 30 miles away that I seldom go to.

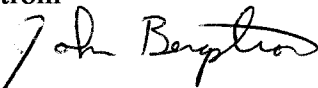
I, my family, and many of my neighbors were not in favor of the Dutton/Brady consolidation. Our intentions were to file for transfer of property to the Conrad School District as was legally possible at the time of consolidation. Since the consolidation of Dutton/Brady the law was changed unbeknownst to us and we now must have the permission of the Dutton/Brady school board to transfer property.

The possibility of being granted permission by the Dutton/Brady school board has become even less likely. Just last month, the Dutton/Brady school board voted to change the makeup of the board from two board members from each district and one at large to all five being at large. The original Dutton district has the voting power to have all five at large members be from Dutton. There are only three Brady district families with students attending Dutton/Brady, who is going to run for the school board where their children do not attend?

I ask for your support of HB 488 so I might have the opportunity to support the school district that I consider as my home school district and up until this point have not been able to vote in or pay my fair share of financial obligations.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

John Bergstrom



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## **HB 488 An Act to Revise Territory Transfer Laws Relating to K-12 School Districts**

As taxpayers of the Brady portion of the Dutton/Brady school district, we request your support for House Bill 488, an act to revise territory transfer laws relating to K-12 school districts.

At the time of the consolidation of the Dutton and Brady K-12 school districts in 2005, Montana law made it possible to transfer land from one school district to another if the petition process was followed and agreed upon by the county superintendents of schools for the counties involved.

Many in the Brady district opposed the consolidation because it meant consolidating with a school district in another county and tax dollars leaving the county. However, they knew a transfer of property out of the newly consolidated Dutton/Brady school districts would be possible after the consolidation as stated by law. These families had a history of sending their children to school in Conrad, but understood that many Brady people hoped a consolidation with Dutton would mean keeping the Brady school open at least as an elementary school. Since the consolidation, the school in Brady has been closed, the building is up for sale, and most of the area students attend school in Conrad.

Before any transfer of property could be pursued, the 2007 Montana Legislature changed the law in response to a high school being built at Big Sky, Montana, and an anticipated territory dispute between Madison and Gallatin counties. The 2007 law requires a written agreement between both school boards as well as the county superintendents.

We as taxpayers, entered into the Dutton/Brady consolidation knowing what the rules were to petition for transfer of property. In the middle of the process, the rules were changed, and we do not feel the 2007 Montana Legislature realized the unintended consequence it would have on our consolidation.

We ask for your support of HB 488 so we may consider land transfers as specified in the Montana law that was in place when the consolidation of the Dutton and Brady school districts took place. We realize HB 488 does not grant such a transfer, but is the procedure to be followed should a land transfer be pursued.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Bergstrom  
1069 Ripple Lake Ln  
Brady MT 59416

To whom it may concern,

My wife and I have a farm 7 miles east of Brady and we have 2 kids. We are in the Dutton/Brady district but our kids go to the Conrad school district. There is a bus that goes by our house but it is a Dutton/Brady bus and it only has a couple kids on it at most. We have to drive our kids to the bus and pick them up everyday (just like a lot of other folks in this area). It is about 20 miles round trip. We also do all of our personal and farm business in Conrad. I also attended the Conrad School system when I was growing up and my parents always drove us to school or we had to drive when we were old enough drive. While that is a big inconvenience, we are more concerned about our tax dollars not going to the school district that our kids go to. We can't change that because of the way the law is now and it needs to go back to the way it was. We would like to be able to petition our land out of the Dutton/Brady district and place it into the Conrad district. Most all of the families around us are in the same position as us and I'm sure that they would support this bill as well.

This bill makes perfect sense. Please support and vote for it.

Sincerely,

Jim Bartsch  
Tammy Bartsch  
6788 Brady Rd  
Brady, MT 59416